



Fairlington Citizens Association
P. O. Box 6182
Arlington, Virginia 22206

July 12, 2024

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
300 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20024

RE: Better Bus Network

Dear Members of the WMATA Board of Directors:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Fairlington Citizens Association (FCA), which represents over 3600 households in Arlington and Alexandria, I am writing to express FCA's deep concern about the adverse impact of the proposed 2025 Better Bus Network on the transportation options available to our residents and the prospect that the proposed changes will work against WMATA's broader goals of encouraging more residents to use transit. We worry that the changes will only increase the number of residents who simply choose to drive into work in D.C.

The proposed changes would drastically reduce service for those who rely on the 7A today in North Fairlington, Park Shirlington, and Shirlington House:

- **A27 Service Reduction.** The new A27 would run every 30 minutes most times, with no extra service during rush hours. Currently the 7A operates roughly every 12 minutes from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., providing 5 buses per hour. The new A27 would only offer 2 buses per hour, a 60 percent reduction in service.
- **Express Lane Utilization.** It appears that A27 would use the regular 395 lanes to Pentagon City at all times, unlike the current 7A, which uses the Express Lanes during rush hours, significantly saving time for peak-period commuters.
- **Inadequate Supplementary Service.** The proposed A29, requiring a long walk on a steep hill to reach Shirlington Transit Center, would not effectively supplement the A27. Additionally, the A29 would not stop at the Pentagon, removing a key benefit for residents who work there.
- **Service Reductions Over Time.** Before the pandemic, Route 7 had three patterns, including a peak pattern that served the Pentagon and Farragut Square. At that time, Fairlington saw up to 7 buses per hour at peak times. Implementing the proposed changes would reduce our service by 71 percent in the last 10 years.
- **Bus Utilization and Schedule Adherence.** Our residents report that the 7A buses are quite full, especially during evening rush hours, and that buses have not been running on time, with frequent delays and bunching.

If WMATA cannot adjust the plan to provide more frequent service on the proposed A27, we ask that WMATA, Arlington, Alexandria, and DASH work together to revise DASH Line 35 to serve Fairlington. This route, originally proposed in the Alexandria Transit Vision Plan, would help connect Alexandria residents to destinations in Arlington while providing better service for Fairlington.

Regarding the proposed changes to Route F66:

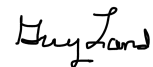
- **Continued Service to the Pentagon.** We are pleased that the new route would continue to provide service through South Fairlington to the Pentagon similar to today's Routes 22A/F. The proposed service frequency of every 30 minutes is an improvement over the current hourly service of the 22A.
- **Peak Time Service Frequency.** However, we are concerned that this route would only operate every 30 minutes during peak times. Currently, Routes 22A/F provide about 3 buses per hour to the Pentagon. Before the pandemic, the combination of Routes 22A/C/F provided 5-6 buses per hour. We ask that this service at least match the 3 buses per hour of the 22A/F at peak times.

Regarding the proposed A71 route from Ballston to Shirlington to King Street-Old Town:

- **New Connection.** We appreciate the valuable replacement for the connection from Fairlington to Shirlington to Ballston that the 22A provides today and the new connection through the neighborhood to King Street-Old Town.

While we are pleased that WMATA was able to avoid the draconian cuts originally envisioned for the FY24 budget, we believe that the Better Bus Network is a step backward in encouraging the use of transit by our residents. We urge you to reconsider the dramatic cuts in service to our community envisioned by this proposal.

Sincerely,



Guy Land
President